DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 469 673 PS 030 717

AUTHOR	Davis, Elizabeth E.; Ceglowski, Deborah
TITLE	Assessment of Child Care Quality in Four Counties in Minnesota. Technical Report.
INSTITUTION	Minnesota Univ., Minneapolis. Center for Early Education and Development.
SPONS AGENCY	McKnight Foundation, Minneapolis, MN.; Bremer (Otto) Foundation, St. Paul, MN.; Resources for Child Caring, Inc., St. Paul, MN.
PUB DATE	2001-03-00
NOTE	51p.
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text: http://education.umn.edu/ceed/publications/measuringup/mureport.pdf.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Administrator Attitudes; *Administrators; *Child Care; Child Caregivers; Counties; Early Childhood Education; Family Child Care; Focus Groups; Labor Turnover; Needs Assessment; *Parent Attitudes; *Parents; Surveys
IDENTIFIERS	Affordability; Availability (Programs and Services); Child Care Costs; *Child Care Needs; Child Care Resource Centers; Day Care Quality; *Minnesota; Resource and Referral Service

ABSTRACT

In order to assess the state of child care in Minnesota, this study examined child care needs, resources, and issues in four counties representing both rural and urban parts of the state. Three sources of information were tapped: (1) the county Child Care Resource and Referral databases; (2) a survey of directors of child care centers; and (3) focus groups with parents in each county. Findings revealed that the supply of care in licensed child care homes and centers was adequate in the two rural counties but fell somewhat short in the urban counties. Vacancy rates averaged about 12 percent across the 4 counties, with 39 percent of centers reporting no vacancies. The county subsidy rate was typically at or above the average child care rate in each county. The percentage of child care centers that are accredited ranged from 0 to 38 percent. Fewer than half of all lead teachers had a 2- or 4-year degree in early childhood education (ECE). Few licensed family providers had ECE credentials. Staff turnover in centers averaged 37 percent across all 4 counties. Parents identified numerous program quality indicators, including planning and offering learning activities for children and having providers that are caring and child-centered. Negative perceptions of child care related to neglect, the teacher-child ratio, and safety issues. Issues related to child care costs included not working because of child care expenses, and the influence of cost on program selection. Kith and kin care was used most frequently for part-time or occasional care. (Contains 10 references.) (KB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 469 673

TECHNICAL REPORT

Assessment of Child Care Quality in Four Counties in Minnesota

By

Elizabeth E. Davis and Deborah Ceglowski
University of Minnesota

March 2001

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Judy Bartlett

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

This study was commissioned by Resources for Child Caring and funded by the McKnight Foundation and Otto Bremer Foundation. Four child care resource and referral agencies collaborated on this project: Resources for Child Caring, Greater Minneapolis Daycare Association, Western Community Action Council, Inc. and Clay Wilkin Opportunity Council (Region IV CCR&R). The authors thank Diana Dalsin, Julianne Sherman and Donna Leicach for their research assistance on this project.

PS 030712

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TECHNICAL REPORT

Assessment of Child Care Quality in Four Counties in Minnesota

INTRODUCTION

This report is based on a collaborative research project conducted by researchers at the University of Minnesota working with Child Care Resource and Referral agencies in four Minnesota counties (Clay, Hennepin, Lyon and Ramsey). We collected and analyzed data from three sources: 1) the Child Care Resource and Referral database in each county; 2) a survey of directors of child care centers; 3) focus groups with parents in each of the counties.

Study Objectives and Research Questions

In order to assess the state of child care in Minnesota, we investigated the child care needs, resources and issues in four counties representing both rural and urban parts of the state. We analyze the amount of care available, the number of children in care and the affordability and quality of child care. We also asked parents about their usage of child care and their perceptions of the quality and problems with child care. Our findings about the key attributes of the child care and education system in Minnesota are described in two sections below. The first section describes the data and analysis using the Child Care R&R data and the survey of directors of child care centers (author: Elizabeth Davis). The second section describes the parent focus groups and presents findings from the qualitative analysis (author: Deborah Ceglowski).

Part 1: Child Care Resource and Referral Data and Survey of Center Directors

The quantitative component of the study included analysis of data from two sources: data previously collected by the four Child Care Resource and Referral agencies, and a survey of the directors of child care centers.

A. Data Sources

Child Care Resource and Referral agency data

Much of the information used in this study was collected from the database compiled by each of the four Child Care Resource and Referral (CC R&R) agencies participating in the study. CC R&R agencies across the state collect data on child care providers on a regular basis and provide this information to parents. The database includes information on the number and type of providers, capacity and vacancies by age, training and education of providers, cost, and accreditation. The four CC R&R agencies pulled information for us from the their databases for 3 six-month periods, covering January 1999 through June 2000.

Survey of Child Care Center Directors

In order to supplement the information in the Resource and Referral database, we surveyed a small number of directors of child care centers. The main objective of the survey was to collect additional information on the education level of staff in child care centers because the information in the CCR&R database is not sufficiently detailed for our purposes. We also asked about vacancies, accreditation and turnover. We conducted the survey by telephone in October and November 2000. Most center directors were willing to participate in the survey, however, some found it difficult to find the time to

complete it (often because the center was short-staffed and they were filling in for missing teachers).

In the two out-state counties we interviewed the director of every licensed child care center operating in the county (3 in Lyon County and 8 in Clay County). Given the small scale of this study and the short time frame, we were unable to do a large-scale, comprehensive survey of child care centers in the metropolitan area. Therefore, in Hennepin and Ramsey counties, we attempted to survey 20 directors of child care centers (out of 268 and 130 centers, respectively). The centers were selected randomly from the list of licensed child care centers in the CC R&R database in the county. The survey results should be interpreted with some caution, as the sample size is small and so the margin of error is fairly large.[1] Nonetheless, the survey revealed important patterns and issues and may suggest the need for more in-depth study. Wherever possible, we compared our survey findings to those of other studies in order to increase our confidence that the results were robust despite the small sample size.

[1]The margin of error on the survey questions is plus or minus 10 to 15 percent in the urban counties. (The survey included all center directors in the two out-state counties and so is not subject to sampling error.)

Table 1:
Survey Completion Rate

	Hennepin	Ramsey
Number of centers	268	130
Number called	30	35
Number refused / unable to complete survey*	11	15
Number completed	19	20
Completion rate	63%	57%

(*Many of those who did not complete the interview expressed willingness to do the survey but were unable to allot sufficient time to complete the interview.)

Table 2:
Comparison of centers interviewed and all centers in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties

	Hennepin		Ramsey	
	All centers	Sample	All centers	Sample
Number of centers	268	19	130	20
Average capacity (# of children)	77	77	69	56
Percent accredited	21%	47%*	18%	40%*
Average number of staff	Unavail.	14	Unavail.	11
Percent in city**	Unavail.	53%	Unavail.	70%

* Accreditation status as reported by the respondent.
** Located in Minneapolis or St. Paul.

B. Research Findings

How many children under 13?

In Minnesota as a whole, the number of children aged 0 to 13 is growing slowly, despite more rapid population growth overall. For the four counties in this study, while the total population is growing (fastest in Hennepin County), the population of children under age 13 is slowly shrinking. Lyon County in particular has seen a decline in its child population (the number of children under age 13 declined 7 percent between 1995 and 1999). If the number of children remains stable or declines, it may not be necessary to increase the supply of child care. However, if more parents decide to enter the labor force and need to use paid child care, the supply of child care may need to increase despite a steady or decreasing child population.

Table 3: Population Changes

1995-1999 Change in population	MINNESOTA	CLAY	LYON	HENNEPIN	RAMSEY
All ages	3.7%	1.5%	1.2%	2.4%	0.7%
Children aged 0-12	0.4%	-4.3%	-7.1%	-1.0%	-1.4%

Source: US Census (2000)

How many children under 13 are in paid care?

Recent estimates suggest that about two-thirds (68 percent) of Minnesota children under age 14 are in non-parental, non-school care on a regular basis. Not all parents use paid child care; many rely on relatives, neighbors, and themselves to provide all care for their children. Working parents are more likely to use child care, and the percent in care varies by age of the child. On average, about 44 percent of Minnesota families with children under age 14 pay (out-of-pocket) for child care. (Wilder Research Center, 2001).

One of the challenges of determining the adequacy of the supply of child care is determining whether the available care options meet the needs of parents. As discussed below, there is not one accepted standard to measure the adequacy of child care supply. Changes in the number of children is a key factor in determining demand, but other factors include the percent of parents who are working, changes in work schedules, cost and quality of care, and the availability of relatives or friends to care for children. Merely using the number of children or the percent of children with working parents is unlikely to provide an adequate measure of the need for child care (Queralt and Witte, 1999).

What kinds of child care are available in Minnesota?

The child care market is complex: child care is provided in a range of settings and is subjected to a myriad of regulations. Most paid child care is provided in child care centers or in family child care homes. In more rural parts of the state, family child care homes are the predominant form of paid child care. In contrast in the Twin Cities, supply is almost evenly divided between child care centers and family providers.

Table 4: Type of child care provider

Percent of capacity by type of care	CLAY	LYON	HENNEPIN	RAMSEY
Center	24.2%	11.5%	54.7%	45.4%
Family child care homes	75.8%	88.5%	45.3%	54.6%

Source: Resource and Referral database

Note that children are also cared for in less formal settings, some paid, some not paid, by babysitters, relatives, and friends. The Wilder Research Center (2001) report provides a detailed look at the variety of child care arrangements used by Minnesota families, including less formal and unpaid care. Our study is focused on the licensed child care market, and in particular, on family child care homes and child care centers.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Is there an adequate supply of child care?

Determining the level of child care services needed in a particular community or area is a complex task: there is no consensus on what amount of licensed care represents an adequate supply. It is difficult to assess the demand for child care based on current market conditions because parents might chose more or different child care if price or availability were different. One state (Oregon) has set a benchmark of 25 slots per 100 children aged 0 to 5 (the number of slots is based on the licensed capacity of child care centers and family provider homes). This supply measure varies across states and across communities within states (which reflects both capacity differences and differences in how it is measured). For example, Illinois and Maryland are estimated to have about 15 and 24 slots per 100 children, respectively (Kreader, 2000). Using this measure, supply of child care appears adequate in the two rural counties but falls somewhat short of this criterion in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties.

Table 5: Child care availability

As of June 30, 2000	CLAY	LYON	HENNEPIN	RAMSEY
Total capacity excluding half-day preschools	2579	1658	37728	19874
Number of children ages 0 - 12	8981	4524	178824	87884
Slots per 100 children age 0-12	29	37	21	23

Source: Resource and Referral database, U.S. Census (2000)

The most recent figures available for these 4 counties show that child care supply continued to expand in the past year in 3 of the 4 counties, but declined in Ramsey County. The capacity of child care centers grew in all four counties, including Ramsey, but this increase was offset by a decline in family child care supply in Ramsey County. Family child care remained about the same in Clay and Hennepin, but increased in Lyon County. A key issue discussed below is the extent of turnover among family child care providers and its impact on children and families.

Table 6: Change in child care capacity

Change in capacity June 1999 to June 2000	CLAY	LYON	HENNEPIN	RAMSEY
Capacity in centers	11.6%	0.0%	36.8%*	4.6%
Capacity in family child care	0.2%	9.5%	0.2%	-5.5%
Total change in capacity of centers and family child care	2.7%	7.7%	17.3%	-1.2%

*Note: This figure may be overestimated because of changes in the Resource and Referral database which resulted in a increase in number of centers included that may not have been new openings.

Source: Resource and Referral database

Another measure of the adequacy of supply is vacancy rates: how many slots are unfilled at a point in time. The more slots that are available (i.e., the higher the vacancy rate), the easier it is likely to be for parents to find child care that suits their needs. Based on the vacancy rates indicated below, the supply of child care overall looks adequate. The vacancy rate averages about 12 percent across the four counties. Quite a few providers have no vacancies however, nearly 40 percent. While these figures measure overall vacancy rates, the availability of care for particular needs (such as infants or non-traditional work hours) or in particular neighborhoods may be in short supply even if the overall vacancy rate is low. Note in particular the lack of any openings for infants in child care centers in either Clay or Lyon County.

Table 7: Child Care Vacancy Rates

Child care centers	CLAY	LYON	HENNEPIN	RAMSEY	ALL 4 COUNTIES
Average vacancy rate	7.5%	13.5%	10.2%	17.6%	12.2%
Percent with no vacancies	25.0%	66.7%	36.8%	26.3%	38.7%

Source: Survey of Center directors

Percent of providers with vacancies	CLAY	LYON	HENNEPIN	RAMSEY
Percent with vacancies for infants and toddlers	37%	20%	19%	38%
Percent with vacancies for school age children	69%	12%	20%	37%
Percent of centers with vacancies for infants	0%	0%	10%	11%

Source: Resource and Referral database

How much does child care cost?

The cost of child care varies by the age of the child and the setting. Rates are usually lower in rural areas, and family child care providers usually charge less than centers. The price of child care is not necessarily an indicator of quality, but quality care can be expensive. For many working families, child care is a sizeable portion of the family budget. Infant care in particular is very expensive, in part because of regulations limiting the number of infants that can be cared for by one adult. Rates vary considerably by age of child and type of provider, as shown in Table 8 below.

Based on the data reported in the Resource and Referral databases, in the two more rural counties, child care rates average around $2 per hour, slightly more for infants, particularly in child care centers. In rural areas, providers often charge an hourly rate and accept part-time children. In contrast, in Hennepin and Ramsey counties, rates range from a low of $2 per hour for toddlers and preschoolers in family child care to the equivalent of more than $4 per hour for infant care in centers. Most providers in these areas charge rates based on a 45 hour week, and may charge whether or not the child is in care for all the hours.

In annual terms, then, full time child care can easily cost $5,000, and may cost as much as $12,000 per year for an infant. For families with more than one child in care, child care costs may represent a sizeable fraction of their monthly budget. For low-earning families,[2] child care costs often represent a sizeable share of the family's income. Based on data from a national survey, of those families that paid for childcare, low-earning families spent an average of 16% of their earnings on child care, compared with

[2] Low-earning families are defined here as those with earnings no more than 200% of the federal poverty threshold.

6% for higher-earning families.[3] Twenty-seven percent of low-earning families with child care expenses paid more than 20% of their earnings, while only 1% of higher-earning families spent this share on child care. In Minnesota, according to this national survey, the price of child care is significantly higher than the national average: $315 per month compared with the national figure $286 per month (Giannarelli & Barsimantov, 2000).

[3] All figures are based on the 1997 National Survey of America's Families (Giannarelli & Barsimantov, 2000).

Table 8:
Comparison of Average Rate and County Subsidy Rate by Age and Type of Care

As of 6/30/00		County Subsidy	Average	Difference between Subsidy and	Percent
County: Clay	**rate per**	**Rate**	**Rate**	**Average**	**Difference**
Infants: Center	day	$24.00	$22.12	$1.88	8.5%
Toddler: Center	day	$20.50	$19.50	$1.00	5.1%
Preschool: Center	day	$18.75	$18.34	$0.41	2.2%
School Age: Center	day	$16.50	$16.20	$0.30	1.9%
Infants: Family Child Care	hour	$2.00	$1.97	$0.03	1.5%
Toddler: Family Child Care	hour	$2.00	$1.92	$0.08	4.2%
Preschool: Family Child Care	hour	$2.00	$1.88	$0.12	6.4%
School Age: Family Child Care	hour	$2.00	$1.85	$0.15	8.1%
County: Hennepin					
Infants: Center	week	$212.00	$208.00	$4.00	1.9%
Toddler: Center	week	$175.00	$170.00	$5.00	2.9%
Preschool: Center	week	$156.00	$150.00	$6.00	4.0%
School Age: Center	week	$156.00	$143.00	$13.00	9.1%
Infants: Family Child Care	week	$135.00	$125.00	$10.00	8.0%
Toddler: Family Child Care	week	$125.00	$114.00	$11.00	9.6%
Preschool: Family Child Care	week	$115.00	$107.00	$8.00	7.5%
School Age: Family Child Care	week	$105.00	$98.00	$7.00	7.1%
County: Lyon					
Infants: Center	hour	$2.40	$2.57	-$0.17	-6.6%
Toddler: Center	hour	$2.15	$2.15	$0.00	0.0%
Preschool: Center	hour	$2.10	$1.88	$0.22	11.7%
School Age: Center	hour	$2.10	$1.88	$0.22	11.7%
Infants: Family Child Care	hour	$2.10	$2.00	$0.10	5.0%
Toddler: Family Child Care	hour	$2.00	$1.94	$0.06	3.1%
Preschool: Family Child Care	hour	$2.00	$1.91	$0.09	4.7%
School Age: Family Child Care	hour	$2.00	$1.90	$0.10	5.3%
County: Ramsey					
Infants: Center	week	$210.00	$207.11	$2.89	1.4%
Toddler: Center	week	$173.49	$167.11	$6.38	3.8%
Preschool: Center	week	$154.00	$146.99	$7.01	4.8%
School Age: Center	week	$151.00	$138.96	$12.04	8.7%
Infants: Family Child Care	week	$125.00	$120.90	$4.10	3.4%
Toddler: Family Child Care	week	$120.00	$109.84	$10.16	9.2%
Preschool: Family Child Care	week	$110.00	$103.32	$6.68	6.5%
School Age: Family Child Care	week	$100.00	$98.69	$1.31	1.3%

Source: Resource and Referral database

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

What is the quality of child care available?

A key objective of this study was to assess the quality of child care in Minnesota in four counties using "structural indicators". Structural indicators are defined as the types and quality of inputs or resources used in providing the care. A number of major research studies have shown a link between high quality child care and positive outcomes for children in terms of cognitive and social development. The Cost, Quality and Outcomes study found that those children who attended high quality child care programs showed higher attainment of language and math schools in early elementary school (Ceglowski and Bacigalupa, 1999). Measures of quality can include both structural factors (inputs or resources) and process and global factors (interactions between adults and children and the classroom environment).

Researchers have identified a number of structural indicators that are associated with higher quality care, including child-staff ratios, group size, and education and training of staff. For this report, we compare a number of "structural indicators" of quality of child care across the four counties. including accreditation, education and training, and turnover of providers. Minnesota sets regulations governing many of these structural indicators, including the education and training necessary for child care providers.

A full-scale study of measuring the quality of child care and its impacts on children was beyond the scope of this study. Research is underway sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning to provide a more comprehensive assessment of the quality of Minnesota's child care.

Structural Quality Indicator #1: Accreditation

Child care centers may apply for accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Standards for accreditation cover teacher training, adult-to-child ratios, and curriculum. Family child care providers may apply for accreditation from the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC). One recent study estimates that there are 172 accredited child care centers and 26 accredited family child care providers in Minnesota (*Working Woman*, 2000)

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is the largest accreditation system for child care centers. The accreditation process includes a self-study, a site visit, and a review and decision by an outside panel of professionals (NAEYC). The NAEYC criteria for accreditation reflect standards set above the level of most state standards on adult-child ratios, staff qualifications, curriculum, and staff-child interactions. While accreditation is not a guarantee of quality, it is one indicator associated with higher quality care. Family providers can also be accredited (by the National Association for Family Child Care) but very few actually do so. Family providers may not feel that accreditation is necessary and may think it is too costly to undertake even if they meet the accreditation criteria.

As one indication of the potential impact of accreditation, in the 1990s the U.S. military required all military child care centers to become accredited in an effort to improve the quality of child care available to the children of military personnel. Nearly all military child care centers achieved accreditation by the late 1990s, and given the success of the program, military officials are considering a similar process for family child care programs (Campbell et al., 2000, pp. 15).

As shown in Table 9, the percentage of child care centers that are accredited ranges from a low of 0 in Lyon County to a high of 38% in Clay County. About 20 percent are accredited in both Ramsey and Hennepin counties. In 3 of the 4 counties studied, the accreditation rate exceeds the national average of 8% (Campbell et al., pp. 15). Very few family providers are accredited in any of the four counties. (Note that some family child care providers choose to apply for a CDA credential, which is described below, instead of accreditation.)

Table 9:

Structural Quality Indicator #1: Accreditation

As of November 2000	CLAY	LYON	HENNEPIN	RAMSEY
Centers				
Number of accredited centers	3	0	56	23
Total number of centers	8	3	270	129
Percent of centers that are accredited	38%	0%	21%	18%
Family providers	213	111	1932	1070
Number of accredited providers	0	0	14	4
Percent of providers that are accredited	0%	0%	0.7%	0.4%

Source: Resource and Referral database

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Structural Quality Indicator #2: Academic credentials of child care center staff

As another indicator of quality, we asked center directors about the educational background of their staff, and in particular, about degrees earned in early childhood education. We found that while teachers must have some early childhood education (ECE) to meet standards in Minnesota, fewer than half of all lead teachers have earned a 2-year or 4-year degree in ECE. (They may have degrees in other fields, or no degree, and must have earned enough credits in early childhood education courses to meet teacher qualifications.) Research has linked the educational background of providers with higher quality care and provision of more age-appropriate activities (Ceglowski and Bacigalupa, 1999).

Table 10:

Structural Quality Indicator #2: Academic credentials of child care center staff

Percent of staff with two- or four-year degree in Early Childhood Education

	Clay	Hennepin	Lyon	Ramsey
All staff	34	28	31	27
Assistant Teachers	14	18	11	13
Lead Teachers	42	45	45	40
Directors	69	61	0	41

Source: Survey of center directors

While aides in child care centers are not required to have education in early childhood education, the low levels of ECE education and experience of aides may be cause for concern if aides are allowed to be in charge of classrooms for part of the day. In Minnesota, recent legislation (in 2000) allowed aides to child care centers to spend one quarter of their time alone in the classroom with children, if they are at least 20 years old, pass first aid training, and have worked in child care for about two years.

According to the centers surveyed, only about 20 percent of aides had any formal education in ECE, and most had been on the job for less than one year. Nearly 75 percent of aides had been employed in a licensed child care setting for a year or less.

Table 11: Experience and Education Level of Aides

Percent of Aides	Clay	Hennepin	Lyon	Ramsey
With any formal ECE education*	11%	20%	33%	18%
Years of experience in child care				
Less than one year	83%	65%	90%	60%
With 2-3 years experience	3%	27%	0%	15%
With 4-5 years experience	14%	6%	10%	2%
With more than 5 years experience	0%	2%	0%	23%

*Includes those who have a two-year or four-year degree in ECE, a CDA, or have taken ECE classes for credit at an accredited institution. In-service training is not included.

Source: Survey of center directors

Structural Quality Indicator #3: The Child Development Associate (CDA) credential

The CDA (Child Development Associate) Credential is nationally recognized credential administered by the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition. To be awarded a CDA credential, a child care provider must undergo a specified number of hours of formal education and training related to early childhood education and care, take written and oral tests, and be visited by a reviewer.

The percentage of staff who have the CDA credential varies across the four counties, the highest percentages (16-18%) in Clay and Ramsey counties. In contrast, only about 7 percent of center staff in Lyon have a CDA.

Table 12:

Structural Quality Indicator #3: CDA Credentials

	CLAY	LYON	HENNEPIN	RAMSEY
Percent of center staff who have CDA	18%	7%	14%	17%

Source: Survey of center directors

Structural Quality Indicator #4: Academic credentials of licensed family providers

Licensed family providers are subject to a number of regulations in Minnesota, but there is less regulation of their educational background than for teachers in child care settings. Family providers can be accredited or can qualify for higher rates of reimbursement in some counties if they have certain credentials. Few licensed family providers have these credentials, as shown below. While credentials do not guarantee quality (nor does lack of credentials necessarily imply low quality), research suggests that education and training in early childhood development is associated with better quality care.

Table 13:

Academic credentials of licensed family providers

Percent of family providers who have	CLAY	LYON	HENNEPIN	RAMSEY
Child Development Associate (CDA)	2.3%	2.7%	4.0%	1.4%
Competency Based Training	4.2%	9.0%	3.9%	0.6%
2 year degree in ECE	3.3%	2.7%	3.0%	4.1%
Four year degree in ECE	9.9%	10.8%	6.0%	6.7%

Note: Percentages may double count providers who have more than one of these credentials.

Source: Resource and Referral database

Structural Quality Indicator #5: Turnover of Staff in Child Care Centers

Research has shown the importance of stable adult-child relationships in the healthy development of children: consistency of care is a necessary (though not sufficient) component of high quality care. The quality of care is threatened by the high rates of turnover among staff in child care settings and of licensed family care providers in Minnesota.

To measure turnover in this study, we adopted a straightforward approach and asked each center director how many staff were in each job category (lead teacher, assistant teacher, aide) one year ago, how many how left during the year, and how many were in the job category now. Our measure of turnover is the percentage of last year's staff who left during the year. We also calculated a measure adjusting this percentage for changes in the number of staff, and the results were similar.

Staff turnover in child care centers was very high in all four counties. Over the past year, according to center directors, 37 percent of staff left a typical center. The rate is higher for aides and assistant teachers compared to lead teachers. Even amongst lead teachers, however, the turnover rate was an astonishing 30 percent. When surveying center directors, turnover was clearly an important issue: finding and retaining qualified staff was one of their biggest concerns.

Turnover does not impact all child care centers equally, however. Nearly one-third of centers surveyed experienced no turnover amongst lead teachers. Most experienced some staff turnover, however, only 15 % had no staff leave during the past year. In centers where turnover exists, it can be quite high. In a few centers, turnover of aides was 100 percent or higher in a year. This disparity in turnover rates suggests that it

would be worthwhile to investigate the factors associated with turnover in different centers. That analysis was beyond the scope of this report, however.

The estimates of turnover from this study are quite high and are in line with previous estimates of turnover of childcare staff in Minnesota. Surveys conducted byt the Alliance of Early Childhood Professionals estimated turnover to be 29% in 1996 and 21% in 1998. Turnover of assistant teachers was above 40 percent in both years. Turnover was highest amongst aides, though somewhat below our estimate. Thus, despite the small sample size in the four county study, we are reasonably confident of these turnover estimates.[4]

[4] Turnover estimates will differ across studies depending on the measure used and whether the estimate is weighted or unweighted by location. For example, turnover rates tend to be higher in metropolitan areas.

Table 14:
Turnover of Staff in Child Care Centers

	2000 Four County Study*	1998 Workforce Survey**	1996 Workforce Survey**
Average level of turnover			
Lead teachers	30%	21%	29%
Assistant teachers	44%	43%	41%
Aides	57%	40%	43%
All staff	37%	n.a.	n.a.
Percent of centers			
With no lead teacher turnover	31%	n.a	n.a
With no aide turnover	23%	n.a	n.a
With no staff turnover	15%	n.a	n.a

*Unweighted average of the turnover percentage in the four counties. Source: Survey of center directors.

** !998 Early Childhood Workforce Survey, statewide estimate.

Structural Quality Indicator #6: Turnover of Licensed Family Child Care Providers

Turnover is not just an issue with staff in child care centers. The majority of paid child care occurs in licensed family child care homes, which also exhibit a high rate of turnover. As shown below, between 5 and 10 percent of all licensed family child care homes closed for business during the six-month period from January to June 2000. Rates of closing were similar in the 18 month period studied, suggesting that between 10 and 20 percent of providers leave the business each year. With each closure of a licensed family provider, families must find new care arrangements, disrupting the continuity of care for those children.

Despite the high closure rate, the overall supply of family child care is not declining due to relatively high rates of entry into the family child care field. While this is good news for the supply of care, it may be a concern that more experienced providers are leaving the field and are being replaced with less experienced providers. The high rate of closure is of concern both because of the disruption it causes in the stability of child care arrangements and because of the impact on the experience level of providers.

Table 15:

Turnover of Licensed Family Child Care Providers

January - June 2000	CLAY	LYON	HENNEPIN	RAMSEY
Licensed family child care homes				
Percent who opened	9.5%	12.2%	10.2%	3.1%
Percent who closed	5.5%	6.1%	9.7%	7.2%

Source: Resource and Referral database

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

References

Ceglowski, Deborah and Chaira Bacigalupa, "Quality of Child Care: A Review of Major Studies and Unanswered Questions," Center for Early Childhood Education, University of Minnesota, 1999.

Giannarelli, Linda and James Barsimantov. *Child Care Expenses of America's Families,* Occasional Paper 40, Assessing the New Federalism, The Urban Institute, Washington, D.C.. December, 2000.

Kreader, J. Lee, Jessica B. Piecyk, and Ann Collins, "Scant Increases after Welfare Reform: Regulated Child Care Supply in Illinois and Maryland, 1996-98." National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University, New York, June 2000.

N.D. Campbell, J.C. Appelbaum, K. Martinson and E. Martin, "Be All that We Can Be: Lessons from the Military for Improving Our Nation's Child Care System." National Women's Law Center, April 2000.

NAEYC, National Association for the Education of Young Children. Web site: http://www.naeyc.org/.

Queralt, Magaly and Ann Witte. 1999. "Estimating the Unmet Need for Services:A Middling Approach." *Social Services Review* (December), pp. 524-559.

U.S. Census Bureau (2000) *Population Estimates for Counties by Age and Sex: Annual TimeSeries July 1, 1990 to July 1, 1999*, Population Estimates Program, Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC http://www.census.gov/population/estimates/county/cas/cas27.txt

U.S. Census Bureau (2000) *Population Estimates for the U.S. and States by Single Year of Age and Sex,* Population Estimates Program, Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC. http://www.census.gov/population/www/estimates/st-99-10.html

Wilder Research Center, 2001. *Child Care Use in Minnesota: Report of the 1999 Statewide Household Child Care Survey*. January.

Working Woman (2000) *National Child Care Survey: Minnesota,* date of original publication: 11/00, http://www.workingwoman.com/wwn/article.jsp?contentId=5176

Part 2: Families' Child Care Usage and Parents' Perceptions of Child Care in Six Minnesota Counties

The purpose of the parent focus groups was to collect information about families' current and past usage of different forms of child care and parents' perceptions about child care quality. The study team devised the questions for the focus group. In addition, a survey of current and past child care was completed by parents participating in the focus groups.

Deborah Ceglowski, Assistant Professor, Early Childhood Education and Outreach Coordinator for the Center for Early Education and Development at the University of Minnesota, was the study's principal investigator. Her research assistants included Diana Dalsin and Julianne Sherman.

All Head Start grantees, all ECFE coordinators in Brown, Clay and Lyon counties and 21 ECFE coordinators in both Ramsey and Hennepin counties received letter inviting them to participate in focus groups (see Appendix A for sample letter). Seventeen focus groups were conducted at 4 Head Start (1 in Hennepin, 2 in Wright and 1 in Brown county) and 13 ECFE programs (1 in Clay, 3 in Hennepin, 1 in Lyon, and 8 in Ramsey) Participants included 5 Hispanic (39 parents), 3 Hmong (21 parents) and 1 African American (9 parents) groups. Focus groups were conducted in Hmong and Spanish and written materials translated in both Hmong and Spanish.

In 8 of 17 focus groups both fathers and mothers participated. Parents were reimbursed $15.00 for participating in the 1.5 hour focus group.

The following chart lists the focus groups by date, county, sponsoring agency, number of participants, and description of the participants.

Focus Group	County	Date	Sponsor	Number of Participants	Description
Payne/Phalen	Ramsey	25 September	ECFE	6	All mothers. Group conducted in Spanish.
Payne/Phalen	Ramsey	25 September	ECFE	6	All mothers. Group conducted in Hmong
Sleepy Eye	Brown	2 October	HS	13	All mothers. Group conducted in Spanish.
Marshall	Lyon	3 October	ECFE	12	Mothers and fathers attended.
Frogtown	Ramsey	5 October	ECFE	8	Mothers and fathers attended. Group conducted in Hmong.
Frogtown	Ramsey	6 October	ECFE	7	All mothers. Group conducted in Hmong
Payne/Phalen	Ramsey	10 October	ECFE	8	All mothers. Group conducted in Spanish.
Frogtown	Ramsey	11 October	ECFE	8	All mothers. Group conducted in Spanish.
Buffalo	Hennepin	12 October	HS	6	Mothers and fathers attended
Dilworth	Clay	17 October	ECFE	9	Mothers and 1 father attended
Howard Lake	Wright	19 October	HS	10	Mothers and fathers attended
Montrose	Wright	19 October	HS	8	Mothers and fathers attended
Frogtown	Ramsey	24 October	ECFE	9	All African American mothers
Working Family	Ramsey	26 October	ECFE	7	Mothers and fathers attended
Edina	Hennepin	31 October	ECFE	10	All mothers.
West Side	Ramsey	3 November	ECFE	4	Mothers and 1 father attended. Group conducted in Spanish.
Brooklyn Park	Hennepin	6 November	ECFE	10	Mothers and fathers attended

Each focus group began by the researcher explaining that the purpose of the study was to collect information about families' child care experiences. Participants were told that there are no right or wrong answers. The researcher insured the parents that all responses would be confidential and that the audio tape of the session would be stored in a locked file cabinet. The researcher then explained that parents would introduce themselves by telling the group how many children they had, whether or not they worked outside the home, and what they used currently for child care. The researcher then proceeded to pose the following questions. Not all parents answered every question though the researcher did elicit responses from parents that were not voluntarily participating in the discussion.

Focus Group Questions
1. How many children do you have? What are you currently using for child care?
2. What are the positive qualities of your current child care arrangements?
3. What are the negative qualities of your current child care arrangements?
4. Is your current child care program your first choice for care?
5. What factors have influenced your selection process?
6. How do you select child care?
7. What out of home child care arrangements have you used in the past?
8. What are the positive qualities of your previous child care arrangements?
9. What are the negative qualities of your previous child care arrangements?

The focus groups were tape recorded and recordings were transcribed. All tapes are stored in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's office. On the transcriptions, each parent is identified by a * to insure anonymity of individuals. NVIVO Nudist software was used to code and analyze the 17 transcripts. After completing the analysis, the following 6 topics were the most frequently discussed among the parents.

Most Frequently Discussed Topics
1. Characteristics of quality child care providers and programs
2. How parents locate and choose child care
3. Negative child care perceptions or experiences
4. The cost of child care and the impact upon family income
5. Kith and kin care
6. Parents who stay at home, do child care, or work opposite shifts

Characteristics Of Quality Child Care Providers And Programs

Parents talked about quality indicators of child care providers and programs 112 times during the focus groups. Parents most frequently discussed programs or providers that:

- plan and offer learning activities for children (32 of 112 responses)
- providers that are caring and child-centered (15 of 112 responses)
- programs or providers that are convenient and (12 of 112 responses)
- providers that they trust and know (12of 112 responses)]

Less frequently mentioned indicators that include

- communication with families (5 of 112 responses)
- children are happy and like the provider and program (8 of 112 responses)
- atmosphere is family-like (8 of 112 responses)
- program staff are well-trained and knowlegable about child development (5 of 112 responses)

The following chart provides a sample of parent's comments for the most frequently mentioned indicators of provider or program quality.

Quality Indicators

Indicator	Parents' Comments	Source
Plan and offer learning activities for children	He's with other kids. He's interacting and learning how to share and learning different situations that each kid is different. We're working on the toilet training. They're helping out, which is great.	Wright
	It's expensive but I wish my kids were still in a licensed daycare home because she taught them things. After school, she'd read books and teach them their ABCs or whatever they need to learn.	Frogtown
	One thing I like about my daycare provider is my three-year-old is learning so much at this lady's house. She just knows a lot. She comes home and tells me a lot. She says her ABCs real good, she can count real good. She's really smart. She just knows a lot. That's one thing I like about the lady is she teaches my daughter. She knows her colors and tells me mama you have on red today. She also has all these things for kids to do. Her apartment is kind of small but she has all these toys and activities for the kids to do. It's like a center but in a home. Now she has five kids, but three of them are at school and the other two are mine, so they're there during the day with her. I just like the way she teaches my kids and treats them like they're her grandkids.	Frogtown
Providers that are caring and child-centered	I don't think she was licensed. Every day that they got there, she was so happy to see them. She'd hug them. You kind of worry about the abuse thing, but she cared. When we thought we can't do this anymore, she made him a little bag that he still has, saying that she'll miss him. She did little things for him that showed that she cared. It was more personal, more than just put your shoes over there and go down and play. It was more of a personal thing. That was good.	
	She also treats daycare as something she loves. She loves kids. You can tell she does. It's not like a business where you have to pay for a holiday day. It is in a sense but in a sense it isn't. She loves the kids.	Marshall
	My first choice was somebody who is going to treat my child lovingly.	Sleepy Eye

	You can tell with my son. He runs in the door, he opens up the door to get in the play area. He waves at everyone. They let me bring his own food because he eats sort of an odd diet. They're very accommodating to us. They give us a beeper. I also have my cell phone. We can come at any time and see what he's doing. It has big glass windows and very open. There's no closed-off areas. They don't let you back in. This is in Edina in a little shopping area. It seems very open and safe. There are a number of adults around. Colby has always been very excited when picking up and dropping off. When he cries, I will leave. I will not leave him if he starts crying when we walk towards it. We've never gone back.	Edina
	What I like is that the child care provider is real positive with my children. There are a lot of positive interactions and you can tell that she really enjoys the children.	Working Family
Programs or providers that are convenient	The good thing that I found when I was going to St. Paul Technical College is they had child care there so I could have my kids there. The good thing is I could spend my breaks from classes to go and see my kids and see what they were doing. I didn't want them to see me. They had a big window where they don't see you but you can see them. So you see what they are doing.	West Side
	Flexibility. I work all night. It's really nice that I can just drop her off. Sometimes there's a flexibility that I can leave here there until 12 o'clock in the afternoon or I can get her at 10 o'clock in the morning as soon as I get off work. That surprised me because a lot of licensed places, you have to go pick up the child by a certain time, like usually 5 or 6 o'clock in the afternoon. It's very hard to find an overnight daycare.	Marshall
	What I like about mine is it's family and she's open to any times--weekends, nights. She doesn't want to do it but she never says no. That's what I like about her because if I need to work at night, she'll take them, and weekends. If it's ten hours, she'll take them. That's what I like about	Frogtown

Providers they trust and know	I always go with my gut. Jean always said just trust your gut. That feeling you get is usually the right one. Like when I meet someone, I can usually get the feeling. Am I comfortable around them? If it's someone who's going to take care of my child, maybe that's why I haven't found anybody to take care of her. The trust has a lot to do with that gut feeling, and it hasn't felt good yet.	Edina
	You trust them and you know they will take good care of your kids.	Payne/Phalen
	I like mine because it's my mother and my sister, and those are the only people I ever trust. I know that my kids can spend the night or if I need her, she's there, and she's going to make sure that my kids are protected and won't be hurt at all.	Frogtown

How Parents Choose

How do parents choose child care? During the focus groups, parents discussed this topic 124 times. They most frequently mentioned the following criteria in selecting child care:

- Choosing child care from a list provided by the county or child care resource and referral (25 of 124 responses)
- Asking others for references for child care providers or programs (22 of 124 responses)
- Selecting a child care provider they already know (14 of 124 responses)
- Picking a child care provider or program after a visit (13 of 124 responses)

Parents also mentioned

- Selecting a program that is culturally congruent with the home culture (9 of 124 responses)
- Choosing a provider because they operate during the hours needed. This was particularly important for parents who work evenings or on weekends (9 of 124 responses).
- Choosing a provider because they will take an infant or provide part-time care. Many parents mentioned that it is difficult to find care for an infant and their choices are very limited. The same is true for parents seeking part time care for preschool children or school aged children. (9 of 124 responses)

The following chart provides a sample of parent's comments for the most frequently mentioned criteria for selecting child care providers or programs:

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Criteria	Parents' comments	Group
Choosing child care from a list provided by the county or child care R&R agency	I called the referral system. They are so outdated that I don't even know why they have them. I was sent a list and I called and they would say I haven't had an opening for six months.	Dilworth
	There's a fee for that list, and you tell them the days, the time, and the children's ages. They give you a list of all licensed daycare. Just the names and the numbers. They don't say how good or bad they are with any.	Marshall
	We went through an organization to get a list of daycare facilities and homes within a certain mile radius, no smoking, no pets. We paid $40 and got a list that was six pages long. My husband is one of those research fanatics who likes to find the answer, so he took the list and started on the phone. The first couple people he called, he learned instantly not to call between noon and two because it's nap time. The first couple providers scolded him. He said I'm new at this, I don't need to be scolded, and so my son will not go to your facility.	Working Family
	Something that would make me feel more comfortable with outside daycare is I would be more open to having S .in daycare two or three times a week if the background checks were a little more strenuous and specific and if they took it farther back and if they let the people open to that. Basically, if somebody is going to be in that line of business, I think they should have the history of their past public.	Edina
Selecting a child care provider or program they already knew	I had a friend in high school and his mom did daycare ever since he was born. So when we had our first child, she watched our first child until our second child was born.	Brooklyn Park
	I knew my first daycare mom since I was a kid. As soon as I found out I was pregnant with my first son, I called her and she did not have an opening. But I told her right away that as soon as you get one, I'd like to have you. Then just two months ago she quit, so I had to find another one. Her sister lived two houses down and did daycare, so I got lucky and jumped in. She had kids go to school and stuff and she had room, so I hopped in there. She has a similar daycare. They run the same situation. I got real lucky.	Marshall
	For me, since I was a day care provider, I knew a lot of them in town. I knew already which ones I would go to and which ones I wouldn't. So that was part of my process.	Sleepy Eye

Asking others for references	She was referred to me by a friend that I had known for awhile. She had really good activities. She didn't let the kids sit and watch TV all day. There was a certain half hour when they would watch TV. Otherwise, they do Christian-based activities and songs. I thought that was really good.	Howard Lake
	I was actually going to her daughter-in-law, who was licensed, and she didn't have any openings and referred me to her because she was retired and could use some extra cash. That's how I got her.	Frogtown
Visiting a home or program	When I chose my daycare three years ago, I asked to actually come over and watch her with her own kids for a day, just to see where her temperament was and stuff like that. She was fine with it. Plus I did ask a lot of people that had her. She was willing to give out references. I did check on those.	Howard Lake
	I would like to go first of all to meet the people. How is their behavior to the children? What kind of material do they have? How is the school? Is it light or windows, you know. If my child will be very safe at the school, like this.	Payne/Phalen
	Then we went to visit the one that our son is currently at. She asked us to come at nap time so that we could talk with her and then stay the rest of the afternoon and even meet the parents picking up the children between four and five o'clock. SO we went at one and stayed until 6:30 because we couldn't stop talking. So it was invitation that she gave to us. We had our whole list of questions that we got off the internet. I don't think we even went through the questions. She went through them for us and laid everything out. It was a perfect thing. There was that initial gut feeling but if we hadn't spent the half day there, I don't know. On the phone, she might not have become as human as we found her to be because she was sort of a no-nonsense kind of woman and we might have thought she was a little pushy. When you see her for a certain number of hours, you realize that's just her initial personality. So that half-day is very important.	Working Family

Negative Perceptions or Experiences with Child Care

Parents' negative perceptions or experiences with child care consists of 67 descriptions. The most frequently discussed topics are:

- Neglect (13 of 67 descriptions)
- Teacher-child ratio (12 of 67 descriptions)
- Safety (12 of 67 descriptions)

The following chart presents information about parents' negative perceptions or experiences with child care in these three areas.

Negative perception or experience	Parent's comments	Group
Neglect	With our first daycare, she was brand new and just licensed. She had two kids in her own house and had Josh, who was six weeks old, and another infant. We'd get there every day and the baby would be in the swing, all day long sleeping in the swing. She would say he's been sleeping for nine hours today. She never had baby toys and never intended to purchase any. She didn't want to spend money on that. The thing that finally set us off is I went there one day unexpectedly at about 10:30 in the morning to pick him up, and she didn't come to the door and didn't come to the door. I rang the bell and stood outside for 20 minutes. Finally, she came to the door. She was in the bathroom with her two kids in the bathtub, while my kid is out of sight. So I pulled them both the next day.	Brooklyn Park
	The one lady I went to see, the first time I went to visit her seemed pretty good about her kids. The next time I came over, she told me to go downstairs and check it out. She just sat there on the couch the whole time, with all six kids in her basement, watching soap operas upstairs. Is it just me or is something wrong here? Her basement wasn't even finished off. There are so many things they could have been getting into down there, and she's just sitting upstairs on her butt. I'm like no, you're not coming here.	Buffalo
	Once I gave my child to somebody to take care of them because I had an appointment. The lady scolded the child a lot. When I came to pick him up, she had not changed the diaper, not even once, and his hands were red. She hit him also. So then the lady's daughter told me don't leave the child with my mom because she hit him because the baby wouldn't let her do his chores. He was barely crawling. I asked her what happened to him. She said he had fell down. That's why my husband doesn't let me go to work because who can take better care of the children than herself.	Frogtown

Teacher-Child Ratio	I know when we were looking at the size, I didn't want a huge one. The one that we had, by the time we were done she had 12 kids and she was the only one taking care of them. I didn't like that.	Marshall
	I have different ages. The most I've had is 21 children and only myself, from birth to 11 years old. Last week I had six children of different ages. I have been with them for about a year and a half. The program has been for two years. I don't think it's a safe place for children. There is the cafeteria for the staff. There is a refrigerator and a small kitchen. It has vending machines. There is not enough space because it's full of tables and cafeteria stuff. It's a small place for the children to be able to play.	Payne/Phalen
	We ran into that at home daycare also. The justification was that she had a helper, but I would drop in and the helper was the only one there. I don't know how legal it is or anything, but I just don't like my infant being with 10 or 12 other kids with one person supervising. I've caught the bottle being propped at one time, and that's just not right.	Marshall
Safety	I had one bad daycare experience. That was when I lived in Watertown. I had Blake in there when he was little. I came to pick him up and he wasn't in the house. They had a fence in the backyard but he was in the shed by gas cans. He had just started walking too. So I pulled him right out of daycare there. It was kind of a shocker. I didn't pay her. That was probably not fair. I have a great daycare lady now.	Montrose
	I had a similar situation with my oldest. She was in a licensed home. I went to get off work one night and went to pick her up, and the daycare lady just didn't know where she was. She was just out strolling around with snow on the ground, shoes and socks off. Just like you said, boom, she was out of there. No, I did not pay her. I was ticked. Then she got very ill. That was it. I said no more of this.	Montrose
	It seemed like every other day B. was hurt, somehow. She had a bruise or cut, something. One day I came to pick her up and I showed up a little early. There was not a teacher to be found anywhere. There were about 13 kids in this room. Brittany is huddled in a corner and these boys are beating on her with wooden blocks. Nobody is anywhere. I'm just standing there in shock. So we pulled her out of there, and that's when I stayed home with them.	Buffalo
	She happened to go in the house and leave my son in his walker outside. He fell off a four-foot cement cliff. She never called me at school. I gave her the number for the school, she had my mom's number.	Buffalo

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Cost Of Child Care And The Impact Upon Family Income

Parents discussed the cost of child care 41 times during the focus groups. Parents most frequently talked about

- Not working because child care is too expensive (14 of 41 discussions)
- Price influencing the provider or program you choose (10 of 41 discussions)
- Changed child care because the price of the provider or program was too high (5 of 41 discussions).

The following table provides parents' comments on these three areas.

Price related factor	Parent's Comments	Group
A parent is not working because the cost of child care is too high	At that time, we made the choice that I would stay home with them because my check was child care. That is the biggest expense and the biggest obstacle in our situation. You still have to carry on a life and provide for your children.	Buffalo
	I'm an RN so I make better money. I went to school through the first part and he worked, and my grandparents watched them and it was very cheap. After I graduated from college and started working, I was working nights and he was working days. It was okay but nights was just too hard. I wasn't there for the kids enough and I was doing 12-hour shifts and sleeping all the time. It was just too hard, so I went to a day job and he got a day job at the same time. Another parent from Head Start was watching our kids then. By the time he brought home his check and we paid the daycare with it, we had $80 left. Then it's not worth it for him to be working. That's how we felt because we'd rather have them at home with the parent than to make $80.	Montrose
	I would also like to be able to study and work, but I haven't been able to find a good place to bring my child. It might be a licensed place, but it's too expensive.	Payne/Phalen

Price of child care influences the provider or program you chose	She say that home day care is cheaper and you may be able to afford it, but they don't like their daily routines and how they do it. They would prefer the center but it costs too much. With what you make, it's probably just enough or maybe not even enough to pay for the day care. What she was saying was is there any way that government could do something that we could all have the right choice to send our kids to where we like? That would be nice.	Payne/Phalen
	When they were little, I didn't take them to child care center because I don't make enough money. So I bring her in to watch. But I don't like it. Usually they have a lot of children and they don't have time to pay attention to any children. Sometimes the children are hitting each other and they don't see it. Or they see it and they can't do anything because they're busy doing other things. I don't like it but I have no choice. I don't have money to pay for child care. With relatives, you can give little to them and they're fine. So the child may be dirty when you come to pick them up. Dirty everywhere. So I don't like it, but I have to do it.	Payne/Phalen
	They are talking about the same problem, that day care is very expensive. For example, they are working and then the payment per hour is $5.00 per hour. She can't pay for all of the dollars for child care during the day. They can only pay $10 or $15 for all the day. They say that the child care is very expensive.	Payne/Phalen
Changed child care provider or program because it was too expensive	It's expensive but I wish my kids were still in a licensed daycare home because she taught them things.	Frogtown
	Sometimes you have to choose the cheaper one because child care is really expensive. Sometimes you cannot afford it because you work for $300 the whole week and you have to pay most of that to child care. So you have to choose the cheaper one. It's kind of hard.	West Side

Kith and Kin Care

Kith and kin care includes part and full time child care provided by grandparents, relatives, friends, and neighbors. In this study, parents mentioned kith and kin care 79 times when describing full and part time child care providers.

Parents most frequently used friends (10 of 79 comments), grandparents (28 of 79 comments) , and relatives (23 of 79 comments) for part time or occasional child care. Parents' responses included:

- I always use my mother-in-law. She loves kids.
- I'm a pastor so a funeral comes up. All of a sudden that funeral has to be on that day. I can't juggle my other stuff. I work 30 miles away and Grandma lives 40 miles away. So I drive 40 miles and then back 10 miles to do the funeral, then back 10 miles to pick them up, and then back home 40 miles. The days that I don't have my husband home, I do more.
- My dad is semi-retired and he's usually off on Thursdays and Fridays. A lot of times my daughter goes with him on Thursdays and Fridays or he goes and picks her up or whatever. There have been times when my daughter hasn't been feeling good and I'll call my parents or my husband's parents.
- She's gotten involved in a mom's club. They do a number of different things but one of them is a baby-sitting co-op. They'll trade baby-sitting back and forth. Many times, if that for one reason or another doesn't work and something needs to be done, then I stay home. But a fair amount of the time, the co-op is able to work for covering things like when she has to go to the doctor or do anything.
- I've had to use a neighbor who works night shifts. She has children and I have children, and we just share time back and forth when we can. We'll get phone calls from each other to send them over, or sorry I can't do it. It's worked really well to have a neighbor that has different hours than I do. It's harder because you might be tired or she might be tired, but we do it anyway. So that has worked very well.

Eleven of the responses described full time care provided by grandparents or relatives. These included:

- We had a good thing with our sister-in-law. She came to our house. We didn't have that to deal with. That part was good.
- When I was in my final semester of college, my mother took care of her.

Parents that Stay Home, Work as Home Child Care Providers, or Work Opposite Shifts

During the focus groups, there are 31 passages describing parents who chose to stay at home with their children. Their comments included:

- I'm a stay-at-home mom with the kids because of the daycare situation partly and because of the expense of daycare. We tried the in-law thing at home, we tried taking them to Kids Haven, and we stay at home.
- We just had one. By the time the twins came around, I already decided to stay home. To put three kids in daycare would cost you $10.50 an hour, and I was only making $6, not including ensuring a second vehicle or gas. It's economic. It's a downhill battle. You don't go there.
- My name is M. I have a 19-month-old and a four-year-old. I stay at home with both of them. My husband and I care for them. I don't use any child care.
- I like being at home raising her. It's our ways. If other people raise her, they pick up things from the daycare provider. I love staying home.

- The positive in mine is that I get to take care of them myself, but the negative is that I can't work because I don't trust anybody taking care of my kids.

Thirteen times during the focus groups parents stated that they had or were currently providing child care for children other than their own. Their comments included:

- I stay home with my children but I'm also a licensed home daycare provider with two kids coming right now.
- I like being home with my kids. I have kids come to my home so it's nice to have other kids for my kids to play with, plus I get a little income also. That's probably the best part is that I'm home with my kids but they have other kids to play with too.
- I'm not licensed but I don't want to be licensed because I just do family. I don't want to make it my career. It's very stressful.
- We've only been here three years, but I've had a lot of people come and say do you think you could handle one more for an afternoon. I'm like sure, the more the merrier because they entertain each other. They go outside and play and have fun. If I was looking for a place for my kids to be, I think I'd want it to be a place where things were low key and definitely not little china cabinets and things sitting out where the kids could knock them over. I would want to look for a place that seemed fun and inviting, where people were having fun and enjoying each other.

Nine passages from the focus group transcripts describe parents who work opposite shifts. Their comments included:

- We like the split shift so that it's one of the parents taking care of the children. It saves a lot of money and they get time alone with each of us.
- My husband and I work opposite shifts. That's why I'm late. I've been running around. He watches Alyssa during the day
- When my husband went to nights and we needed someone for two hours, we switched to three daycares in one year. We'd go there and they soon realized they wanted that spot for full-time kids, not two kids part-time. So we were kind of backed into a corner to go to our daycare facility that's more flexible. In retrospect, I think it was the best thing we've ever done.

In addition to participating in the focus groups, parents completed a survey of current and past child care:

Child Care Usage Survey

Since you've become a parent, how many years have you worked, attended school, or attended job training? _____

If the answer is 1 or more, please continue completing the form. If the answer is 0, you do not have to complete the form.

Who took care of your children during these times?

___Relatives or friends

___Unlicensed home day care

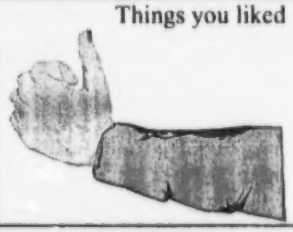
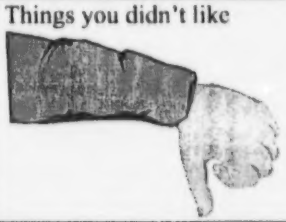
___Licensed home day care

___Daycare center ___Head Start

___Other (Please list)

___What is the total number of people/programs that took care of your children during these times?

Please select your current and 2 other child care arrangements you have used. How long have you used them? What did you like or not like about the person or program?

Child Care	Years Used	Things you liked 	Things you didn't like 
Current			
1. Past			
2. Past			

Because non-English speaking parents had difficulty completing the form, 81 parents completed the form from ten focus groups. The groups are: Brooklyn Park, Buffalo, Dilworth, Edina, Frogtown, Howard Lake, Marshall, Montrose, Sleepy Eye, West Side Family Center, and Working Family Resource Center.

How Long Have Parents Worked or Attended School?

- 13 of the 81 parents have worked or attended school 2 less than 2 years
- 42 of the 81 parents have worked or attended school between 2 and 5 years
- 16 of the 81 parents have worked or attended school between 6 and 10 years
- 10 of the 81 parents have worked more than 10 years.

What are Parents' Current Child Care Arrangements?

- 21 of the 81 parents reported that children were cared for by their parents
- 18 of the 81 parents used kith and kin care
- 2 of the 81 parents used unlicensed family child care
- 24 of the 81 parents used licensed family child care
- 16 of the 81 parents used center-based child care

Continuity and Discontinuity of Care

From the 81 questionnaires completed, 26 respondents reported on the length of stay at each care situation. Seven of the of the 26 families have utilized the same care situation since they have had children.

Comments from these parents included:

- Positive interaction with my children, can tell that she enjoys my children, welcome at any time, includes nap, playtime and learning activities into the daily routine, easy to talk with, willing to work with me on the needs of my children. (Licensed FCC for 3 _ years)
- My child is happy and engaged each day. (Home CC for 19 months)
- Curriculum, variety of learning experiences. (2 years at same center)
- Teachers are well trained and educated, lots of activities, encourage potty training that suits child's development. (same center for 2 years)
- she has a good atmosphere, clean, kids were well behaved (FCC for five years)
- flexible hours, trustworthy, does things with my kids (Licensed FCC for 13 years)
- local, well known and long time residents, much activity and work with children (Licensed FCC for 5.5 years)

Nineteen of the 26 respondents indicated that they had changed child care arrangements. Length of time at individual arrangements varied from 1 month to five years. Reported reasons for change of care included:

- Too large. Not enough individual attention
- Too large a group, messy house
- Could not say my duaghters name – did not move with her speed
- Was drinking – passed out when we went to pick up – never went back
- Over crowded, huge student to teacher ratios
- Expense of child care
- Got a dog, dog was not used to children and bit my son
- Provider became agitated easily, too many videos, little supervision at nap time
- Needed more structure, scheduled too many doctors visits and having different people watch the kids

- Provider quit child care
- Was not always at home watching the kids

Positive and Negative Attributes of Current Child Care Arrangements

Parents described the positives and negatives of the current child care arrangements. Their comments are listed in the charts below.

Positives and Negatives of Current Child Care Arrangements

Group	Positives of current arrangement	Negatives of current arrangement
Brooklyn Park	• Excellent care – Dependable - Wonderful -Caring • Trust – Safety- Reliable -Cheap • Child receives more attention for Special needs • Being with children, planning activities for my own children and daycare children, being able to work and take care of my own children • Quality time with children • Consistent attention and care, structure, positive relationship with provider, both children ask to go to daycare • Fewer expenses	• Out of the way drive • Being away from adults all day. House being a mess or damaged • Miss social interaction of working outside • No time with each other
Buffalo	• Know what goes on, more personal; it's a family feeling • Has helped my sons immensely, a very positive impact for them	• Trying to keep daycare separate from family business (relations) • The income guidelines are so low many families (esp. single parents) that it would greatly benefit are ineligible

Dilworth	• Local, well known and long time residents, much activity and work with children • Small group, home setting, provider & good communicator, good hours, flexible – Time spent with my children, instituting my own value system, playmates for my children • Good for kids, no worry about finding care • Friendly, warm atmosphere, I like everything about it • Warm and homey environment • Christian atmosphere • Variety of kids in different age groups, home atmosphere • Flexible hours, trustworthy, does things with my kids	• Their dog! • Inability to get out and get things accomplished outside of the home. Potty training, behaviors of outside children brought in to the home • Gave up profession • More colds from more kids • Too many kids • Unhealthy snacks, number of kids • Child becomes too attached to one provider, hard to find day care child will stay with
Edina	• New face, new stimulation for child • Convenience • They are family, very reliable and caring • Not an imposition, convenient, more kids, toys, etc. • Familiarity, same kids and parenting philosophy, one on one • Child to staff ratio • See child development, influences my values and manners on my child	• Too laid back some times • Different styles of handling my child • Long drive (35 minutes each way) • Lack of attention • Availability • The staff to child interactions • Frustrating at times, days can be extremely long at times
Frogtown	• She's good with my kids and she does not show favoritism • Everything • Not paying • Only have my children • Able to be around family environment • She is family, makes sure my kids get to school and back home safely	• When she only gave me one-day notice when she has something to do or she can't watch kids, she smokes and sometimes my kids smell like smoke • Having to clean up when I returned home from work • Children don't get to go on activities much • She smokes

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Howard Lake	• Local • Everything • Children have become more social, teaches my children to be independent • She's really organized and the kids are happy to go there • He knows the children well and they know him	• Cost is expensive • Making me sign a contract to pay advanced money charges too much an hour
Marshall	• Staff is very professional and attentive • She gets involved with the children and does activities • Excellent – educational opportunities, papers, computer, field trips • "Grandma" atmosphere, clean, kids were well behaved • It is inexpensive, night or daytime flexible • Close to home and work, very up beat and organized, easy to talk to about the kids and scheduling day care and any problems • Structured, lots of activities, flexible • Structured environment, learning, experiencing new activities • Very flexible, structured activities for kids, healthy eating	• Much more expensive than licensed in home – but worth it • Does not have learning time • Sometimes it can be hard to find a sub day care if she gets sick, TV is on some and is ok, but I wonder if it is too much • Not enough individual attention, too much comparing to other children
Montrose	• She is great with kids, good set up • I don't have to bring her anywhere • Everything is good • Free, great teachers, all around wonderful program	No comments
Sleepy Eye	• Living with them, mostly all my friends • They take good care of them • Sometimes naps • Positive attitude, attention • Everything is ok • Loving atmosphere, she reads to them, and my daughter is very happy there • She takes real good care of them • I like it because it's their father and I know he will take good care of them	• Smoking, movies that are watched (bad taste), does not watch them well • He lets them do whatever they want and they make a mess
West Side	• I like her because she is really good with kids, she gives them love and care • How she takes care of them	• My younger kids do not have contact with other kids • (Staff) scream when they don't pay attention

Working Family	• Positive interaction with my children, can tell that she enjoys my children, welcome at any time, includes nap, playtime and learning activities into the daily routine, easy to talk with, willing to work with my on the needs of my children • Very caring, comfortable home • Pays attention to detail, parental concerns • My child is happy and engaged each day • Curriculum, variety of learning experiences • Teachers are well-trained and educated, lots of activities, encourage potty training that suits child's development	• I like my daycare situation – I wish that I could be at home with my children more though • Recently started the daycare, still getting organized • Too noisy • No back up if provider is sick or on vacation • Turn over of teachers • High turnover, don't use buses with seat belts on field trips and there's been some controversy with school vs. parents on this

Parents' Past Child Care Arrangements

Parents then listed their past child care arrangements. Parents could report on more than one arrangement so that the number of responses is greater than 81.

- 24 reported that children were cared for by their parents
- 53 had used kith and kin care
- 12 parents had used unlicensed family child care
- 3 of the parents had used licensed family child care
- 7 of the parents had used center-based child care

Positive and Negative Factors of Past Child Care Arrangements

Parents then described the positive and negative characteristics of their past child care arrangements. The following chart depicts their responses.

Group	Positive Comments about past child care	Negative Comments about Past Child Care
Brooklyn Park	• Good care • Child oriented • Dependable • Activities • Individual attention • Handy, other kids • Trust • Gives you freedom from work and do other activities • Safe, loving environment • Knew her for 10 years before childcare – had over 15 years experience and taught the kids a lot	• Too large – not enough individual attention • Different people and kids • Cost • Intermittent • Kept child in infant swing all day, never held baby. Left baby unattended to bathe her own children. Never played one on one with infant • Smoked in her house • Expensive • Kids got sick a lot
Dilworth	• Provider gave lots of hugs, read a lot of books, frequently outside • At home, parent still taking care of children, flexible work schedules, very part time, more help needed from Aunt (grandma) • Caring, fun, and creative • Few children • Convenient to where I worked • Variety of kids in different age groups, home atmosphere • Structured, used day care programs for activities, gave written information daily for when the child was 0-2 years age on meals and potty, etc. • The learning atmosphere • Lots of one on one time	• Too large a group, messy house • Always juggling schedule, hard to find extra help in family • Lots of pay for no care • Not enough activities, room was too small • Unhealthy snacks, number of kids • Not as many hugs • Hard to find part time childcare • Could not say my daughters name did not move with her speed (?) • Location was out of the way
Edina	• Family, complete trust • Educational tools, toys, and teaching skills • Good values, safe, convenient, good care, attention • Loved child interaction, Montessori philosophy, flexibility • Everything • Very loving and affectionate, had many of the same views as mine • Contact with other kids	• Different educational level of caregivers • Imposition • Not being with my child, chose to stay at home after 2nd child • Nothing • Had different views at times, missed being with baby • My child had separation anxiety

Frogtown	• That she is always there • Everything • The kids loved her and she kept them at my home • Was good to my child • Was on a bus line • Very nice lady to have as a day care provider, house is very clean and well taken care of • They were taking care of by brother • Much control, they gave her good respect • Did many educational activities, had parties, and went on outing • Learning environment, school bus • My daughter loved being there, was not scared to be left with this person • They took naps and ate lunch	• She let them have their way • Did not treat me very well • Provider was not able to carefully watch out for all kids, some were fighting and disruptive behaviors • The daycare did not make them take naps • Having to wake them up out of sleep to take them to daycare • Was too expensive • Half a day program • House could have been cleaner
Howard Lake	• Local, friend, price • Nothing • Everything • She was organized with good learning activities • It was really close to home • Christian day care, supportive to my kids • The kids were fed well • Children were familiar with caregivers and vice versa • Cost was inexpensive • Nothing went right from the beginning • She was wonderful with the kids and they loved her, always interacting with them	• Everything – abusive to my daughter • Paying when kids were not there, paying for her to take 2-week vacation • Don't think she was a "kid" person; she wasn't very interested in kids • Too far away • Letting my children go swimming in a pool in her yard • Left notes on my care when she couldn't baby-sit, kids did not nap, were not clean when I picked them up • When I moved she lived too far away to take them anymore

Marshall	• Took them to the park, did crafts, very attentive, very nurturing • She was very good; she helped you out as a parent and did things with the kids • Structure and availability • More children, a little more structure • Thought she would be attentive, location • Wonderful caregiver, very organized, she was teaching my child colors and painting • Very organized and up beat personality, like her work, got the kids outside a lot and the TV was off a lot! • Was convenient, other children were same age • In own familiar environment, loved strong feelings of security • Very caring, healthy eating, cost effective • Did crafts, played outside, and worked on computer • Very well with kids, always maintained her cool • Good, very nurturing for infant • Simple fact that I had someone to watch my child • Very small group of kids • Kids liked the other children, was well educated • Structured activities, healthy eating, discipline of children	• Got a dog, dog was not use to children and bit my son • She quit • No honesty at the end! Yelled too much to the kids when having bad day, showed favoritism, lack of confidentiality • Provider became agitated easily, too many videos, little supervision at nap time • Not attentive, too concerned with business/child care, messy, not always there (subs) • Expensive • She had a very large group of kids. She did a wonderful job. Just lots of kids (about 10-12) • Cleanliness was questionable, attitude • Not enough experience, no real structure, varied in people • Need more structured activities • She could not handle the amount of children she had • Needed more structure, scheduled too many doctor visits and having different people watch the kids • Not enough structure and discipline as he grew older • Expensive and disorganized • Wasn't always at home watching the kids
Montrose	• Kids knew her and liked her • Took good care and disciplined • Close to my home • Trust them completely, convenience, lower cost	• Taking him out in the cold • Higher cost • Noticed she had too many kids

Sleepy Eye	• Food program, state and licensing professionals checking daycares out • Structure, learning activities, and interaction with other children • Good food, naps daily • She took good care of them • Fed him and took good care of him • I like them because they were nice to them and my daughters want to go back	• Not enough verbal interaction • Smoking • She smoked outside and my kids have asthma bad • This place was a disaster, she didn't feed my baby or change her diaper, she was never held, and sat in her chair all day long • None • He cried a lot, he was not happy • Them watching the TV, not the children
West Side	• Relative, I worked comfortable, flexible schedule, much love • The lady who takes care of my 2 older kids had a routine for them, she teaches and cares for them • She has a lot of patience and is very good, has activities • Very patient, very kind with kids • Very well organized, kids learned a lot • They have structure and it is a sliding fee program • My kids learned to share with more kids, very open	• She had pets (dogs and cats) • Lets my children have long naps • She lived too far, small apt. • Transportation, no schedule while I was at work • The food, I would like for my kids to have nutritious food
Working Family	• Daily calendar of activities and meals, field trips, great teacher • Willing to work with special needs child • Small number of children at day care • Great with infants • Structured environment	• Many sick kids, poor management • Too much time spent preparing and cleaning up meals/snacks • The day care provider did not smile very often, appeared unfriendly • No back up, provider ill often, took kids shopping all the time • Too many children, high turn over of staff

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

[X] This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

[ ] This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").